

# Katharina Lampert – about her person

On October 5th, 2013 Katharina Lampert would have been 100 years old. We take this as an occasion to commemorate at this point publicly the victims of the Nazi "euthanasia". Probably every city of our country had such sacrifices.

Katharina Lampert grows up in Götzis. At that time people with mental illnesses and disabilities are seen as "useless eaters". For them, there are specific institutions provided: in Rankweil the "charity institution and mental hospital", in Götzis as in most bigger village a poorhouse.

At the age of 15, she experienced the fire of the family home in Götzis. The Mayor asks the insurance company "to allow at least to get a corresponding partial compensation."

The Lampert family was quite "impecunious and fundless" and placed in the care institution. Mrs. Lampert then moves together with her daughter Katharina to Sulz, a small village nearby. The father is heater in the carpentry Niederer in Dornbirn. A year later, the mother dies and Katharina is being placed for six years in the poorhouse Götzis. She is epileptic. There is no medication for it. People with disabilities are seen at the time as "unworthy life" and a genetic threat to society. Eugenics is demanded by a broader public and therefore implemented. In the schools it is taught that enormous sums could have been saved if there wouldn't be as many disabled persons. From 1933-45 about 400,000 people in Germany and Austria were sterilized without their consent.

In February 1941 Katherina Lampert was deported to Castle Hartheim near Eferding in Upper Austria and gassed there – together with about 300 other sick or disabled people from Vorarlberg.

In a letter dated from February, 12<sup>th</sup> of 1941, the father of Katharina Lampert was informed that his daughter was transferred because of "war-important reasons" to the Hartheim Castle. Visits were "inadmissible". At that time thousands of people with disabilities were picked from their homes and placed in remote locations of the German Reich so that Nazi could cover up the murder better.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> 1941 the following letter informs her father about her unexpected death because of "status epilepticus". Immediately after her arrival in Hartheim Castle people were stripped and led to the gas chamber. In Hartheim secretaries were instructed to send letters with fictitious causes of death to the relatives. The immediate cremation of the corpse should nip any investigation in the bud.

At least eight people from Götzis (11.000 inhabitants) could be confirmed who were described as "invalid", "unfit for work" or "abnormal" and were murdered around 1941. Their names are missing at the victim's memorial beneath the church. Here are those mentioned publicly, whose names are confirmed to be Nazi victims:

Bell Wilhelmina, Fleisch Josef, Josef Lampert, Lampert Katharina (Monteurs), Lampert Mary Magdalene, Mittelberger Erna, Scheyer Josef, Josef Ströhle (Source: Database Hartheim Castle / Upper Austria also notes in the village chronicle of Nagele)

In Vorarlberg the knowledge of murdering the mentally ill and disabled people in the Nazi era has been repressed / blocked for decades. Instead of facing the past forty years ago a fundraising in state TV started for the disabled. It has an interesting title: "Licht ins Dunkel" ("Light into the dark"). Did people believe that the mentally disabled people are living in the darkness? It is the wright issue still played on the wrong stage.

After the war, it was also long time difficult to raise funds for the non-war-related disabilities. In parliament there was opposition to the growing expenses. Eugenics as a way of thinking was still deep rooted in the minds of people. Disabled facilities emerged only 20 years after the war, a staff training even after 40 years.

The School of Social Care Professions was established in 1990 in Götzis as a school for adults: staff education. Since 2006 the name was changed to Kathi-Lampert-school for social care professions. Since 2012 the Kathi-Lampert-school also has an integration class. By

naming our school after a victim of the "Nazi euthanasia" we want to keep the blocked crime awake. Not repression, but the memory is healthful - especially in Vorarlberg, where a disproportionately high number of people were killed.

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